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Armed Career Criminal is sentenced to 262 months for bank robbery, firearms offenses

A federal judge today sentenced **Joseph E. Beaver**, of Providence, to 262 months in federal prison – nearly 22 years – for bank robbery and weapons offenses. Providence Police arrested Beaver in November, shortly after an armed robbery at a Sovereign Bank branch on Smith Street. A witness had followed Beaver as he drove away from the bank and reported his whereabouts to police on her cell phone.

The Office of the United States Attorney announced the sentence, which Chief U.S. District Court Judge Ernest C. Torres imposed today in U.S. District Court, Providence. Because of his prior criminal record, which includes more than 30 arrests and convictions for such offenses as assault, larceny, and burglary, Beaver, 39, was deemed an Armed Career Criminal under federal law. Beaver had been released from the Rhode Island Adult Correctional Institutions approximately a month before the robbery.

In April, Beaver pleaded guilty to armed bank robbery, using a firearm to commit a violent crime, and being a felon in possession of a firearm. At the plea hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Gerard B. Sullivan said that the government could prove that, on November 28, Beaver

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entered the Sovereign Bank at 1025 Smith Street wearing a mask and, threatening the use of a gun, robbed three tellers of approximately \$20,000.

A customer arriving at the bank saw the robber leaving, called 911 from her car, and followed the robber's car. The witness lost sight of the car in the vicinity of Elmcroft Street and Academy Avenue but had kept 911 dispatchers apprized of the vehicle's whereabouts.

Patrol officers spotted the robber's vehicle parked in a garage at 84 Elmcroft Street and, after obtaining permission from the owners to enter the building, found Beaver hiding under a bed in the first floor apartment. In a bathroom of the apartment, police found a gun, a mask, a bank bag, and money.

Providence Police and the **FBI** investigated the case.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Gerard Sullivan prosecuted the case as part of **Project Safe Neighborhoods**, a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes. Under Project Safe Neighborhoods, the US Attorney's Office, working with Providence Police, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and the Attorney General's Office, aggressively prosecutes federal firearms offenses in an effort to incarcerate those responsible for gun violence and deter others who might be tempted to commit gun crimes. Since 2001, firearms prosecutions in the U.S. Attorney's Office have more than doubled and have resulted in lengthy prison terms for gun offenders.